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September 17, 2010

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I am writing today regarding the current rulemaking by the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) dealing with livestock marketing. We can agree that transparent and efficient markets benefit producers, processors, retailers and consumers. There has never been any question that the Packers and Stockyards Act should be strictly and vigorously enforced. However, it is apparent there are bipartisan concerns that the proposed rule goes well beyond the scope of the 2008 Farm Bill.

While many in the affected industry and Congress have focused on what the proposed rule includes, also troubling is what it does not include – a sound economic analysis for interested parties to judge both the need and utility of the proposed rule. This is a wide-sweeping regulation and I believe it would be beneficial to at least conduct an economic analysis. I am concerned that despite Congress having appropriated \$13 million in the current fiscal year for the USDA Office of the Chief Economist, GIPSA has not utilized this resource to analyze this proposal. As the public comment period has been extended and continued Congressional oversight is anticipated, I request that a comprehensive analysis of this proposed regulation by the USDA Chief Economist be submitted in sufficient time for those that have made comments to incorporate the analysis into their evaluation of the proposed rule.

During these times of economic challenge, the American people rightly expect this Administration to fully understand the impact of its policies on jobs. The Department's failure to fully investigate the economic impact of this regulation is particularly concerning because it implies that the Department is heedless of the rule's impact on people's jobs. I am hopeful that you will act quickly to reverse that perception and ensure that Congress, farmers and all Americans fully understand the impact of this new regulation on jobs and job-creators before it's enacted. Your attention to this critical matter is appreciated, and I look forward to your response.

Sincere regards,


Roy Blunt

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